

OF EL DORADO



HOWARD GLYNDON

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BY

HOWARD GLYNDON

(Mrs. Laura C. Redden Searing)

*Rose leaves floating on the foam lees
Of a swollen brook in spring,—
These may typify the tenor
Of the song: I bring;
For if not, like those sweet vagrants,
Near allied to love and mirth,
In their lightness and their slighness,
They 're as little worth!*

SAN FRANCISCO

C. A. MURDOCK & CO.

1897

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Admission Day.

(California, September 9, 1850.)

Native Sons of the Golden West!

Daughters dear, of the loveliest land
That ever the sunlight hath caressed,

Fresh and fair from the Maker's hand!
The day that to-day ye celebrate

Is the day of days in *your* calendar;
So young are the years of your golden State
That her children's spirits are still astir.

Their hearts still thrilled and their blood aflame

With the thought of all that the news implied,
Upon that day when the tidings came

And their loved land stood up, flushed with pride,
In the ranks of her sister States, a State;

Brave blood, strong heart, and a will to do!

They kept her not at the entrance gate,
For she brought as her dower a thing or two
That her elegant sisters could not despise
(*Their* descents were long, but *her* clothes were
new);
She was splendid and rare, if not old and wise—
She, of whom you 're proud—the Mother of
you !

They pictured her in the days of old
As a couchant panthress—an untamed thing,
As a savage princess decked with gold,
With barbaric glitter of chain and ring.
Deep in her eyes were the dreams of Spain,
And her savage blood had a tinge of blue;
Oft was she sought and wooed in vain—
She, of whom you 're proud—the Mother of
you !

Of her early days, what memories throng,
When they would have made her a dusky nun!
But the floating fragments of foreign song
Were lost in silence ere well begun.

And all of the time she hid in her heart
 Its golden secret for you destined;
You, the fruits of her Statehood, were set apart,
 To have what the others could not find!

Ye may well be proud of her — call her fair —
 Love her sun-kiss'd cheeks and her lovesome
 lips —
Play with her splendid lengths of hair —
 Kiss her eyes, whose glory all gems eclipse!
To each native daughter and native son,
 Scions of such a wonderful tree,
I say that since ever the world begun
 No land has been worthy of love, as she.

“As true as gold” and “as good as gold,”
 Was a saying, when she was hid from sight;—
So they said in the days of old,
 When she came to them in the dreams of night;
And as good she is, as her own pure gold;
 And as fair and precious, and firm and true;
With the most of her story yet untold —
 This is she that you love — the Mother of you!

She will bring you love, she will bring you wealth,

She will bring you gladness and length of days,

And, better than gold, she will bring you health,

She whom her children are proud to praise!

Oh, right you are to call her the gem

In the bright confederacy of States!

But see that you shine in her diadem,

For the will of the world upon you waits;

And the eye of the world is on you, sharp,

And the thought of the world, it questioneth you;

And since you are born to a golden harp,

See that the music you make is true!

The Unveiling of the Fountain.

(Presented to San Francisco by Mayor James D. Phelan, and dedicated to the Native Sons of the Golden West, September, 1897.)

This delicate shaft, so slender, yet so strong,
How proudly it upbears
Its splendid burden, perfect as a song,
The which, it crownlike wears !

Meet art thou, O fair figure, to uphold,
With arms untired and young,
Th' unwritten book, like to a cup unfilled,
Like to a song unsung !

But that fine future toward which thy face
With such glad pride is turned,
Shall grasp and hold thee in a long embrace
Till all its fame is earned.

That chronicle, as yet unwrit, is all
That older lands have won;

And 't will be grandly more, whate'er befall
Beneath the onlooking sun;

For it shall be the pride of him who stands,
All rugged, at thy feet,
To bear aloft the flag within his hands,
Each nook of earth to greet!

And steadily the nations all shall stream
Through thy wide Golden Gate;
Oh, California! fair as any dream!
On thee the world shall wait.

Ah, Fountain! Let thy virginal waters gush
Freely, to flow unstained;
And never may thy voice's music hush
Till all our glory's gained.

Thy Maker and Inspirer, worthy each
The soil from which they sprung;
For Brother-love and love of Art they teach;
Of these my muse has sung.

San Francisco,
September 9, 1897.

December in California.

I walked to-day in my garden
That never fears the frost,
Where I never, like Bryant, the poet,
Mourn for the blossoms lost;*
And I thought of the bleak, bare meadows
And the leafless woods of the North,
Where the heralds of the Storm King
Are girding and riding forth.

I walked where the calla lily,
Nymph-like, is holding up,
Out of her exquisite bower,
Her faultless, creamy cup;
Where the heliotrope, so fragrant,
Opens its purple eyes,

* "The Death of the Flowers."

Modest, but frank and generous,
Forgetting to court disguise.

Where a thousand roses are smiling
Full in the face of the sun,
As perfect as if their blooming
Had only to-day begun;
And mignonette runs riot
In the kindly soil at their feet,
While the crowds of dainty marguerites
Whisper, how life is sweet!

Where the tall and sturdy geranium
Flames in the roadside hedge,
And hangs its scarlet blossoms
All over many a ledge;
Near the lemon verbena spicy,
That 's like California girls,
Who bare their cheeks to the sea breeze,
And let it ruffle their curls.

And I paused where that fragrant hostage
Of a royal golden dower—

Beloved of brides expectant—
 The tropical orange flower,
Revealed by its breath, delicious
 As a maiden's dream of love,
Hung, betrayed in its ambush,
 As by its murmur, the dove;

By the palm tree, straight and stately,
 As some dusky, Orient maid;
Where the humming bird was fluttering,
 Radiant and unafraid;
Well I knew he was seeking
 For the jasmine's honeyed lips,
Though he lingered where the nectar
 Of the white crape myrtle drips.

They 're all, all here, the flowers,
 Brought from many a land;
And the treasured exotics, fearless,
 With the woodland blossoms stand;
And they call to their far-off sisters
 With one musical refrain:

“ You are hiding from the winter,
We’re laughing in the rain!

“ Come where there’s naught to make us
Shrivel or turn afraid;
Where the wind lilts, like a lover,
Through every ferny glade;
Where a hundred thousand wellsprings
Nourish our grateful roots;
Where a million fostering sunbeams
Warm our growing shoots.

“ Come to the flowers’ kindest
Refuge on all the earth,
Where the shy and timid violet
All the year looks forth.
For we nod upon the hilltop,
We smile upon the plain,
And while you hide from winter,
We’re laughing in the rain.”

May in California.

O Nature, let me lay my heart,
Dear mother, close beside thine own!
For what true child of thine can say,
“I am left all alone!”

So long as thou dost keep for him
Such peaceful Paradise on earth
As this, where every lovely thing
Is fostered into birth,

And springs into such perfect life
As that worn world, so gray and dim,
That lies so far away from here,
Beyond the horizon's rim,

Knows not and cannot realize,
And sneers to hear of. — Pitiful

The plight of one whom suffering makes
Incredulous and dull.

That Eden should come true again,
Serene as on its natal day,
Smiling beneath the kindest skies
Upon the lap of May;

Who would believe it — seeing not —
That we recover that lost land?
Who would believe us without proof,
Or trust the beckoning hand?

But Nature keeps her precious things
For her true children; gently here
She calls them to her faithful breast
And kindly draws them near.

California Gold.

(The Eschscholtzia.)

Never the grasp of greed, the brutal touch
Of hands sin-grimed and sold
To avarice and lusting over much,
Have soiled thy virgin gold.

Nor thee profaned, rare treasure-trove, that gleams
In El Dorado's earth!
Never thy shining dulled or cankered seems,
Nor cheapened is thy worth.

And with thy unstained wealth we cannot buy
Things garish, things that flaunt;
Thou pleasurest not the coarsened, untaught eye;
Thyself thou dost not vaunt.

And yet, when night thy yellow flag hath furled,
Often I bend, by stealth,

To bless thee for thy day's work in the world,
Thy glad, untroubled health.

For I have marked thee when thou openest
Upon the sun thine eyes,
Baring to him the riches of thy breast—
Scornful of all disguise.

Are thy bright leaves a promise, golden flower,
Of higher, rarer things
Than all the favors that the present hour
To El Dorado brings?

A California Rose Fair.

A feast of roses in the land of gold!

Well might their sisters in Cashmere's fair vale,
That Tom Moore raved about, with poignant envy
Droop and turn pale.

For here these queens of flowers, each one lovelier
Than the preceding, maze us with their splendor,
Until we falter in a sea of beauty,
Half drowned in reveries tender.

Attar of roses! O divinest perfume!
The costliest incense of the Persian clime!
But we can't smile at fables Oriental —
We have it all the time!

For here, the rarest roses, elsewhere fostered
With jealous care, and guarded night and day,

Are flung into our laps in careless luxury,
And grow their own sweet way.

Fearless of chilling frosts or storms Atlantic,
Ah, well might some new Lallah Rookh exclaim:
This is a rose elysium, angel-guarded,
Thrice worthy of thy name!

Our land's best gold not in the earth is hidden,
Its radiance shines upon the upturned faces,
Even of its flowers, born of the divine,
Life-giving Sun's embraces.

Therefore, we hold our rose feast of thanksgiving
For the flower-treasure of our golden year
In this gold land, clasped by God's love and nature's,
Where life need know no fear!

May, 1887.

Del Monte, March, '87.

Oh! siren-sweet Del Monte smiled,
Sitting beside the summer sea,
Bland old Pacific's charming child,
Brightening the breast of Monterey.

How sped the lovely, luresome days!
How melted into morn glad nights!
'Midst her embowered, enchanted ways,
Nestled amid serene delights.

.

But what? But what? An ominous glow
Deepened and brightened o'er the bay
And shone across its placid flow,
Startled, we cried: "'T is Del Monte!"

Ah! what could harm so rare a thing—
And on a night so silver-fair?

Only the trees did shadows fling—

Only did sigh the love-soft air.

And many a heart in many a clime

Shall start with pain and sadly say:

“Burned? There I spent my happiest time;

Alas, for lovely Del Monte!”

The New Del Monte, December, '87.

Out of her ashes she rises,

Created anew,

And steps to the seat that she slipped from,

By the bay waters, blue.

And seeing her sit there serenely,

As fair as of old,

The tale of her loss seems a rumor

Right swiftly dispelled.

Was it true? Did she perish? Ah, never!

It was but the mist

That came 'twixt our eyes and her splendor—

That was all—I insist!

A Summer Song of the Sea.

Betwixt blue and blue!

Face to face with the sky,
Or heart to heart with the ocean,
Lazily let me lie.
Arms of the great Sea-Mother,
Restfulest ye of all,
Even when you lure us downward
Beyond recall.

Betwixt blue and blue!

Fair is the sight of the sky,
Sweet is the breath of the ocean,
Lightly the winds go by!
'Tis the dear sea's heart that calms us
With its rhythmic rise and fall,
And to feel it throbbing beneath us
Is best of all.

Betwixt blue and blue!
Alone with the sea and the sky;
Oh, to lie here forever,
Not questioning why!
With the kind sky's face above me,
And the kind sea's heart below,
Soothed by the wind's light touches
That come and go.

Bay of Monterey,

Summer, '97

The Hills of Santa Cruz.*

I've seen the far-off Apennines
Melt into dreamy skies;
I've seen the peaks that Switzers love
In snowy grandeur rise;
And many more, to which the world
Its praise cannot refuse—
But of them all, I love the best
The hills of Santa Cruz.

Oh, how serenely glad they stand,
Beneath the morning sun!

* OAK KNOLL, DANVERS, MASS.,
December 6, 1887.

DEAR FRIEND HOWARD GLYNDON:—

"The Hills of Santa Cruz" is a lyric which would do honor to any magazine. Fine in conception and felicitous in expression, it will cling to the Santa Cruz mountain range forever. It will do for the little city by the sea what Bret Harte has done for San Francisco and Mrs. Mace has done for Los Angeles. It will give new interest to the surrounding scenery, and really add to its value in the eyes of the tourist and speculator.

Very truly thy friend,

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Oh, how divinely fair they are
When morn to noon hath run!
How virginal their fastnesses,
Where no Bacchante woos
The kisses of the grapes that grow
On hills of Santa Cruz!

And then, how beautiful they look
Just when the sun departs,
With benediction on their brows
And homesteads on their hearts!
O hills of Promise, Peace, and Joy!
No heart could well refuse
To own the charm of your delights,
Dear hills of Santa Cruz!

When the reluctant sun hath gone
And left ye lone and sweet,
What rapture then to trace the line
Where earth and heaven meet.
So low ye lie beneath the sky
We ne'er can you accuse

Of harshness or repellant pride,
Kind hills of Santa Cruz!

Ah! no; ye are forever dear
And restful to the eyes,
Tho' ever changeful, yet each change
Is but a glad surprise.
'Twixt gentle skies and gentle seas,
Your outlines never lose
The tenderness that Eden knew,
Calm hills of Santa Cruz!

Ye stand before us like to those
Meek angels sent of God,
Who chanted blessings on the earth's
Imbrued and guilty sod;
So ye, sweet ministers of hope,
In mind and heart infuse
Peace and good will on earth, O dear,
Dear hills of Santa Cruz!

And if I be the first to lay
The laurels at your feet,
Why, then my heart can only say
The task is passing sweet,—
For sure I am and sure we are
Who ne'er your outlines lose,
There are no hills to match our own
Glad hills of Santa Cruz!

The Homes of Santa Cruz.

What time the east is reddened by
The flushing of the dawn,
Before the arrows of the Sun
Are from his quiver drawn;

While the young Day, strong, rising up,
Shakes from his locks the dews, —
I watch the smoke like incense rise
From homes of Santa Cruz!

From where they 've climbed to nestle on
The mountains' swelling crest
To where they peep from out the vale,
As from a sheltered nest.

I deem they are a favored race
Who rear their Lares here;

Better than gold or gain by far
These skies so kind and clear;

Sweeter the sight and smell of flowers
That round these casements blow
Than all the wealth the warring world
Holds in its troubled flow.

For nowhere rests the roving eye,
Commissioned far or near,
On vine-clad slope or flashing sea,
But that God's smile is there.

Or broken heart, or broken health,
Have drawn us from afar,
But as we cluster here like bees,
Each well may bless his star.

.

Saw they, those brave old Spanish friars,
Thy hidden glories gleam?
O Mission of the Holy Cross!
Saw they, as in a dream,

Thy rounded hillslopes, white with homes,
That rise before me now,
What time they stood upon thy beach,
Or scaled Ben Lomond's brow?

They builded better than they knew—
Ah, not for somber Spain!
The clue was in the hands of God,
And He hath made it plain.

They builded better than they knew
In planting here the Cross;
To-day their triumph blossoms out
With no alloy of loss.

Fruit of the Cross's tree! Thy roots
Were nourished in their blood;
Thy germ was quickened by the prayers
Of that lone brotherhood.

The seed came to the waiting soil
From far across the seas,

Of El Dorado.

And found it like those fabled isles,
The gold Hesperides!

O happy homes, on happy hills,
Beneath such happy skies,
I bless ye in the pride of noon
And when the shadow lies

Upon ye, dwellers in the dells,
Amid your leafy haunts
I gaze, and think the heart of man
Hath here no further wants.

O City of the Holy Cross!
O city by the sea!
A blessed balm for many a loss
Is the sweet sight of thee!

Proudly upon thee sits the grace
Of thy immortal name,
Fair flower of the Pacific Slope,
Flushed with the sunset's flame!

California Diamonds.

Who has tossed this handful of diamonds
 Into the grass of June —
Into this dew-wet grass through which
 The wind goes singing a rune?

Whose the hand so lavish and careless,
 Opened so wide to throw
Into the flowering grass this peerless
 Treasure that glads me so?

Oh, a handful of clear-cut, shining,
 Virginal, priceless gems!
Some of them nestling, sparkling, gleaming,
 Close to the green grass stems.

But what setting were fairer, fitter,
 Than this dew-wet grass of June?

How midst its green they quiver and glitter
Under the sun of noon!

Here is one like an eye of fire,
And one outglitters the rest,
Until I bend me to lift and clasp it
Close to my envious breast.

O my gems! they glimmer and shimmer,
And fade like a passing breath—
Dewdrops caught in a spider's web,
And my human touch is death!

Capitola.

Like some fair sea-nymph flung ashore,
Capitola!
To haunt the briny deep no more,
Capitola!
Like some bright, bonny Lorelei lass,
Thou makest the bay thy looking-glass,
And beckonest to all that pass,
Capitola!

Thou 'rt like thy name-sake, pretty place,
Capitola!
Thou hast her arch, enchanting grace,
Capitola!
Sly siren of the laughing eye,
Spoiled darling of the sea and sky,
Once glimpsed, we cannot pass thee by,
Capitola!

Thou sittest at the water's edge, Capitola!
Beneath a friendly, sheltering ledge, Capitola!
Letting the tide play with thy feet,
Turning thy laughing face to greet
Each comer with a welcome sweet, Capitola!

In thee, our days glide on like dreams, Capitola!
Like flowers flung on loitering streams, Capitola!
With laugh and music, jest and dance,
Surcease from care and restful trance,
And all the glamour of romance, Capitola!

And then we go; but from afar, Capitola!
Thy memory haunts us, like a star, Capitola!
We leave the toil, the stress, the strain,
In thy kind arms to rest again,
And listen to the surf's refrain, Capitola!

Hotel Capitola,

March 23, 1896.

Memorial Day in California ;
the G. A. R.

O day of memories dear, yet sad,
Proud tho' regretful, glad yet tender;
The drift and wreckage of the mad
And fiery years of war-time splendor.

Tho' here there be no sight nor sound
Of strife or carnage to remind us
How the red blooms of battle wound
About the stormier times behind us.

No! Not in all the wildwood wealth
Of flowers that nature, open handed,
And laughing out in golden health,
Heaps on us, veterans disbanded,

Is there a single one to wake
Old thrills, old pains, old camp-fire stories;

Not one the sight of which can take
Our thoughts back to the awful glories

Of flowerful fields that patriot blood
So cheerfully and richly watered —
Flowers that smiled up to where we stood,
For right and country to be slaughtered.

We cannot say: "Like this and this
Grows on the graves at Arlington;"
Nor with a proud and passionate kiss,
"Like this, behold a battle won."

No; on the old fields where we fought
We left the flowers and many a token;
Nothing to this new land was brought
But memories tenderest when unspoken.

And for the sake of these we stand —
A little, worn-out band, fast thinning —
To-day with heart to heart, and hand
In hand, as once at the beginning.

Stronger than links of steel the thought
Of comrades who no longer listen
Nor answer to the roll call; fraught
With tenderness that makes to glisten

The tears in eyes that never fell,
When death stared in them during battle;
That never faltered when the shell
Burst near them with its direful rattle.

O peaceful years, that grew between!
O happy graves, 'neath skies so tender!
And overgrowing what has been,
The present with its glad surrender.

Yet, sad for us when overhead
This day dawns, taking us still further
From the old times, so dear tho' dread,
And one is missing and another.

For we, whose living hands bestrew
Our comrades' graves in mood memorial,

Not long may linger so to do,
And none may wear our robes seignorial.

When none are left our tale to tell,
Not one to answer to the roll,
When all are mustered out and well
We slumber, one victorious whole,

Memorial mornings, fresh with dew,
Shall see our children glad, unscarred
By the fierce fires that we went through,
Strew flowers where "glory mounts on guard."

